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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/780,279	02/09/2001	A. Buell Ish III	VF1 - 0003US	8038
29150	7590	08/15/2006	EXAMINER	
LEE & HAYES, PLLC 421 W. RIVERSIDE AVE, STE 500 SPOKANE, WA 99201			MATHEW, FENN C	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3764	

DATE MAILED: 08/15/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

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Office Action Summary	Application No.		Applicant(s)	
	09/780,279		ISH, A. BUELL	
	Examiner		Art Unit	
	Fenn C. Mathew		3764	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 28 January 2005.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 2-9, 12-23 and 36-41 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 2-9 12-23 36-41 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>8-23-02</u> | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

1. The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.
2. Claims 2-3, 5-9, 12-15, 18-23, 36-39 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Martinez (U.S. 5,306,223). Martinez discloses a pad assembly comprising a compressible layer (34) having an uncompressed, non-uniform thickness, and an elongated plate member or backing plate (36) of approximately uniform thickness having front and back surfaces, the front surface being engaged with the second surface of the compressible layer, and wherein the front surface of the elongate plate member is shaped to be capable of providing an approximately uniform-thickness of the compressible layer during exercise. Martinez further teaches the front surface of the elongated plate member or backing member comprising a contoured concave support attached to the second surface of the compressible pad. Martinez further teaches the first surface concave and adapted to engaged the portion of the user's body. As best understood, Martinez is capable of providing an approximately uniform-pressure portion when a compression force is applied to the first surface. Martinez also discloses a coupling assembly (30) coupled to the back surface of the elongated plate member adapted to attach to an exercise machine. Referring to claims 36-39, Martinez discloses the claimed structural limitations as well as method steps as claimed by the applicant.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claims 4, 16-17, 22, and 40-41 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Martinez alone. With regards to claim 4, 16, and 22, the specific range of radius of curvature is considered a matter of design choice within the knowledge of the skilled artisan as no inherent advantage nor specific purpose is met by the specified range, and it appears that the configuration of Martinez would perform equally well absent unexpected or undesired results.

With respect to claim 17, Martinez discloses the claimed invention except for the specific material of the compressible pad. The specific material chosen would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention as the skilled artisan would choose a material based on the suitability for its intended use.

With regards to claims 40-41, Martinez teaches a pad capable of being pressed by the arms or shoulders of a user.

Response to Arguments

5. Applicant's arguments filed 01/28/2005 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Examiner respectfully disagrees, and points out that Martinez does in fact show a plate that is curved. The level of 'uniform-thickness' would vary depending

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on the size of the user's body part. An individual with a large arm or leg would most certainly cause the pad to maintain an approximately uniform thickness. Applicant is respectfully reminded that claims are viewed in their broadest reasonable light, with prior art being applied in the same manner.

Conclusion

6. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Fenn C. Mathew whose telephone number is (571) 272-4978. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Friday 9:00am - 5:30pm.

The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

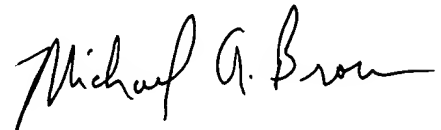
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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

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August 13, 2006



MICHAEL A. BROWN
PRIMARY EXAMINER